



Looking after your back



Looking after your back



If you are a carer you can get back problems if you have to lift or move the person you care for.



Some carers have to lift or move people lots of times every day.

This session can help you understand:



- **How you can look after your back and keep it healthy.**



- **What to do if you hurt your back.**

About back problems



A back problem is when:

- You get pain in your back.
- Your back is stiff and you can't move it properly.



Back problems can be very painful. It can stop you from being able to move about.

How you can get back problems



You might have an accident and hurt yourself. For example if you fall.



You might do a simple thing like bend over to pick something up and suddenly your back will hurt.



You might get back problems slowly. This can be from doing simple things everyday. Things like cleaning and carrying shopping bags.



Stress can cause back pain too. You breathe differently when you are stressed and your body can feel tight and tense.

How to look after your back



Here are ways you can look after your back and keep it healthy.

Exercise



Things like walking, cycling and swimming are great ways to exercise.



Pilates and Yoga are good for making the muscles in your back stronger. They can help you relax if you feel stressed.



Try not to sit down for too long

If you have to sit down for a while try to get up every 30 minutes.



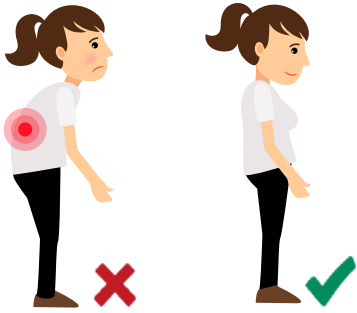
You could go for a little walk or go and make a drink.



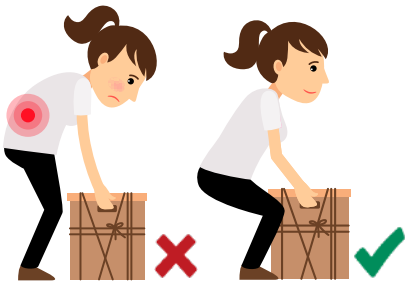
Good Posture

This means how you sit and stand. Here is what good posture looks like.

Good posture when you are standing up

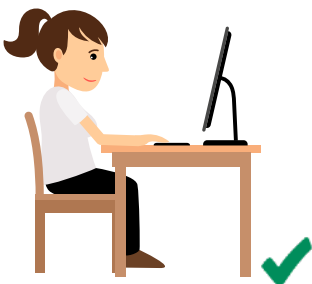


- Keep your body straight.



- Don't lean over to pick something up or look at something.

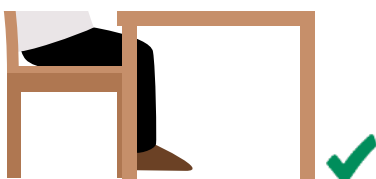
Good posture when you are sitting down



- Try to keep the top of your body straight.



- You could put a cushion behind your back to help you sit up better.



- Your feet should be resting on the floor.

Good posture when you are lying down



Make sure you don't have too many pillows as this can hurt your neck.

In bed a comfortable mattress can also help.

Eat healthy food



Eating healthy food will help you have a healthy weight.



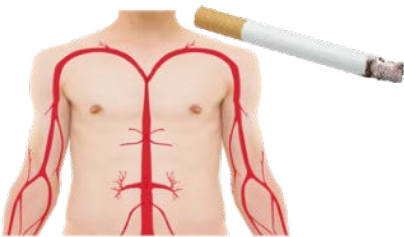
If you weigh more than you should it can cause back problems.

If you lose weight you will have better posture and more energy.



Stop Smoking

If you smoke it is more likely that you will get back pain.



Smoking can stop blood from moving around your body properly. This includes getting blood to your back.



Speak to your doctor. They can give you help and advice on how to stop smoking.

Lifting or moving the person you care for



These are the **2 most important** things when you lift or move someone.



1 Make sure you don't hurt them.

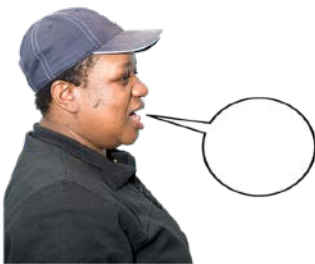


2 Make sure you don't hurt yourself.

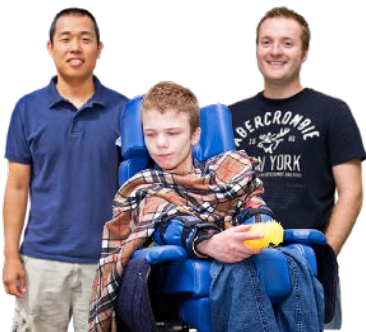
Things to think about before you move someone



● Can they move themselves?



● Have you told them you are moving them?



● Are you strong enough to move them safely or do you need help?

Wear the right clothes and shoes



Do wear flat shoes or slippers with backs.



Do not wear baggy clothes. They can get caught on furniture or the person you are helping to move.



Advice and Support

Your local council has services to help carers keep safe and healthy.



They have training on how to safely move the person you care for.



They can tell you about any equipment you can get. Things like walking frames and handrails in the shower.



You can talk to your doctor.
Your doctor can tell you about other services who can help.

How can you tell if you have a back problem



The first things you might notice are:

- You have pain in your back or it feels like it is burning.
- You can't move very well.
- Your back feels numb or you have pins and needles. Pins and needles is a tingling feeling you can get in your body. It can be really painful.



It is important to try and sort out your back problem straight away. If you leave it your back problem might get worse and last longer.

What to do if you have a back problem



Most back pain gets better in a few days or a few weeks.



To help with the pain you can take painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen.



If you are already taking other medication talk to staff at the chemist first.



Try putting something hot or cold against your back. Things like a hot water bottle or an ice pack can help.

x12



If the pain lasts longer than 12 weeks you should go and see your doctor.



The doctor will usually talk to you about pain killers and exercises that can help.



The doctor might ask you to see a physiotherapist. A physiotherapist helps people who have pain in their body or find it difficult to move.

Useful Websites



Carers UK have lots of information on their website.

Website

www.carersuk.org.uk



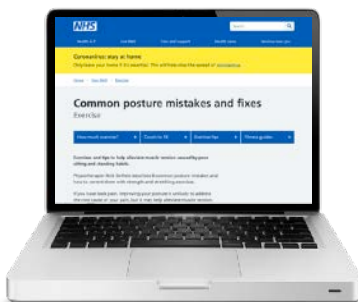
Age Uk Website

www.ageuk.org.uk



Carers Trust Website

www.carers.org.uk



NHS Website

www.nhs.uk

Search for information on:

- Stopping smoking.
- Posture.
- Eating well.
- Safe lifting tips.